

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for distributing software, comprising the steps of:
providing a television broadcast distribution system having one or more
broadcast channels for broadcasting analog and digital television information to a receiver
5 of a user;
designating select ones of the one or more broadcast channels for the
transmission of one or more software data streams;
transmitting the one or more software data streams over the select ones of
the one or more broadcast channels at a scheduled time, each of the one or more software
10 data streams having a unique ID associated therewith;
selecting for download via the receiver selected ones of the one or more
software data streams according to the respective unique IDs; and
downloading the selected one or more software data streams to a user
storage device during the scheduled time, the user storage device connected to the
15 receiver.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the television broadcast distribution
system is a cable television broadcast system.
3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising an error checking step during
the step of downloading such that the one or more software data streams which are
downloaded are checked for errors during the download process.
4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the receiver automatically re-selects for
download, and downloads, the one or more software data streams which fail the step of
error checking.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of broadcasting broadcasts the one or more software data streams repetitively during a specific period of time.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of broadcasting broadcasts the one or more software data streams once during a specific time period.
7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising a step of accounting which logs the unique IDs of the one or more software data streams which were downloaded with an accounting device, and transmits the unique IDs to a provider of the one or more software data streams using the accounting device.
8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the accounting device interfaces to a public-switched telephone network, and transmits the unique IDs over the public-switched telephone network to the provider of the one or more software data streams.
9. The method of Claim 7, wherein the accounting device interfaces to a packet-switched global communication network, and transmits the unique IDs over the global communication network to the provider of the one or more software data streams.
10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of programming the receiver with time, channel, and the unique ID information.
11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the one or more software data streams comprise software applications which are broadcast on a first channel, and one or more software updates which are broadcast on a second channel.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of downloading downloads the selects ones of the one or more software data streams directly to a user computer over a communication link existing between the receiver and the user computer.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the communication link is a universal serial bus.

14. The method of Claim 12, wherein the communication link is a high-performance serial bus.

15. The method of Claim 1, wherein the television broadcast distribution system is a digital television broadcast system.

16. A system for distributing software, comprising:

a television broadcast distribution system having one or more broadcast channels for broadcasting analog and digital television information to a receiver of a user;

one or more software data streams designated for transmission on select ones of said one or more broadcast channels; and

a user storage device connected to said receiver for storing said selected one or more software data streams which were downloaded;

wherein said one or more software data streams are transmitted over said select ones of said one or more broadcast channels at a scheduled time, each of said one or more software data streams having a unique ID associated therewith;

wherein said select ones of said one or more software data streams are downloaded via said receiver according to said respective unique IDs.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein said television broadcast distribution system is a cable television broadcast system.

18. The system of Claim 16, wherein said select ones of said one or more software data streams are checked for errors when being downloaded.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein said receiver automatically re-selects for download, and downloads, said one or more software data streams which fail the error checking process.

20. The system of Claim 16, wherein said one or more software data streams are broadcast repetitively during a specific period of time.

21. The system of Claim 16, where said one or more software data streams are broadcast once during a specific time period.

22. The system of Claim 16, wherein an accounting device logs said unique IDs of said one or more software data streams which were downloaded, and transmits said unique IDs to a provider of said one or more software data streams using said accounting device.

23. The system of Claim 22, wherein said accounting device interfaces to a public-switched telephone network, and transmits said unique IDs over said public-switched telephone network to said provider of said one or more software data streams.

24. The system of Claim 22, wherein said accounting device interfaces to a packet-switched global communication network, and transmits said unique IDs over said global communication network to said provider of said one or more software data streams.

25. The system of Claim 16, wherein said receiver is programmed by inputting parameters which comprise time, channel, and said unique ID information.

26. The system of Claim 16, wherein said one or more software data streams comprise software applications which are broadcast on a first channel, and one or more software updates which are broadcast on a second channel.

27. The system of Claim 16, wherein said select ones of said one or more software data streams are downloaded directly to a user computer over a communication link existing between said receiver and said user computer.

28. The system of Claim 27, wherein said communication link is a universal serial bus.

29. The system of Claim 27, wherein said communication link is a high-performance serial bus.

30. The system of Claim 16, wherein said television broadcast distribution system is a digital television broadcast system.